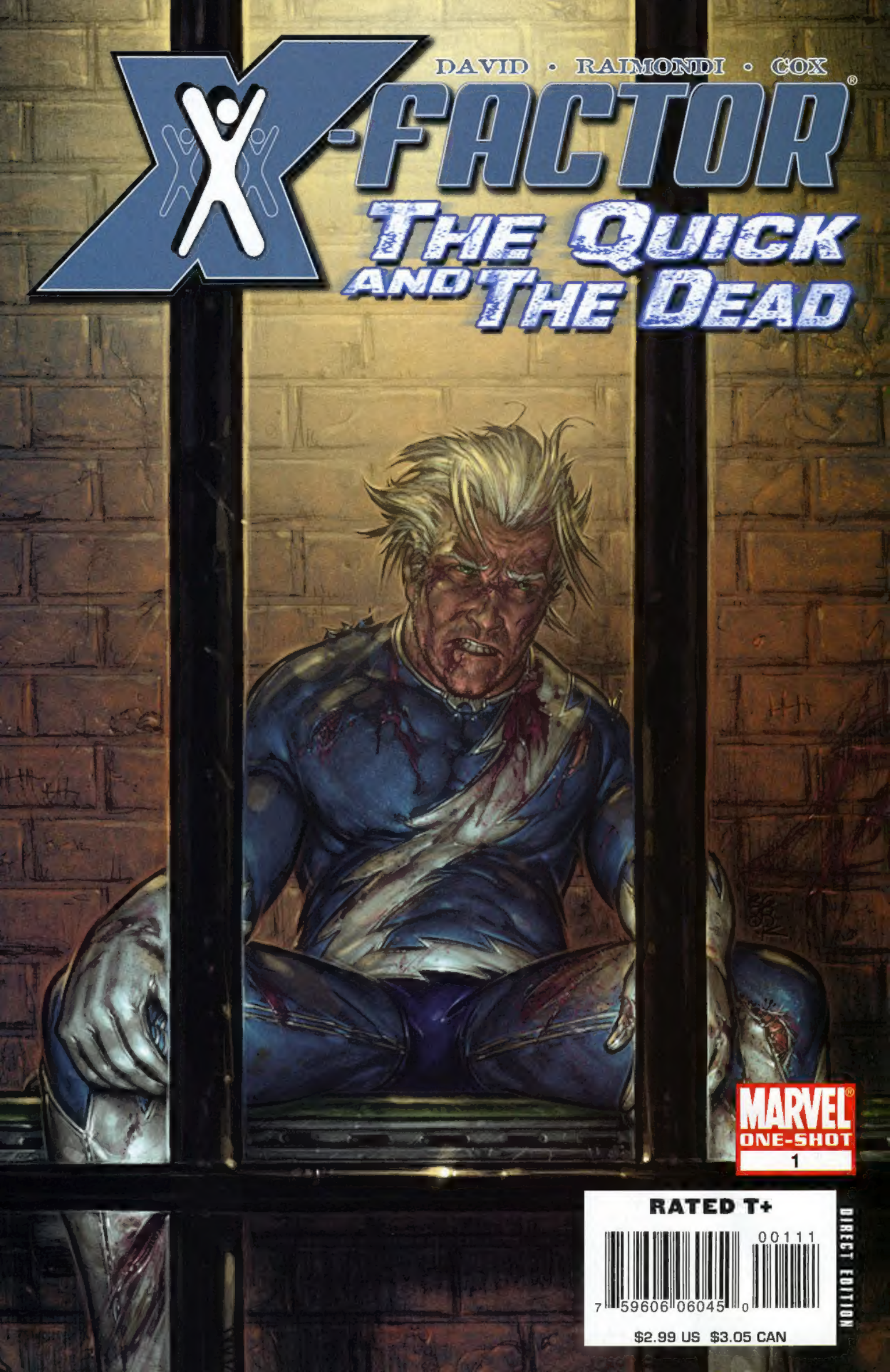
DAVID • RAIMONDI • COX

X-FACTOR

THE QUICK AND THE DEAD



MARVEL ONE-SHOT 1

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IN A SOCIETY WHERE MUTANTS AND FORMER MUTANTS ALIKE FEEL THREATENED BY THE WORLD AROUND THEM, THEY TURN TO THEIR FIRST, BEST LINE OF DEFENSE WHENEVER TROUBLE ARISES: X-FACTOR, THE PRIVATE DETECTIVE AGENCY FOUNDED BY MADROX, THE MULTIPLE MAN.

X-FACTOR

PREVIOUSLY...

PIETRO MAXIMOFF, THE FORMER QUICKSILVER, HAS HIT HIS LOWEST EBB. BEREFT OF THE TERRIGEN CRYSTALS THAT GAVE HIM HIS POWERS TO RESTORE MUTANT ABILITIES AND HIS TIME-TRAVELING POWERS ALSO LOST TO HIM, HE SUFFERED THE ULTIMATE INSULT OF BEING DEFEATED IN COMBAT BY LAYLA MILLER DURING AN UNLIKELY BATTLE AT A CENTRAL PARK CAROUSEL. NOW POWERLESS, FRIENDLESS, HOPELESS, QUICKSILVER LIES ROTTING IN A JAIL CELL, HIS CAPTORS HAVING NO IDEA THAT THEIR PRISONER WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE EVENT THAT DECIMATED MUTANTKIND...

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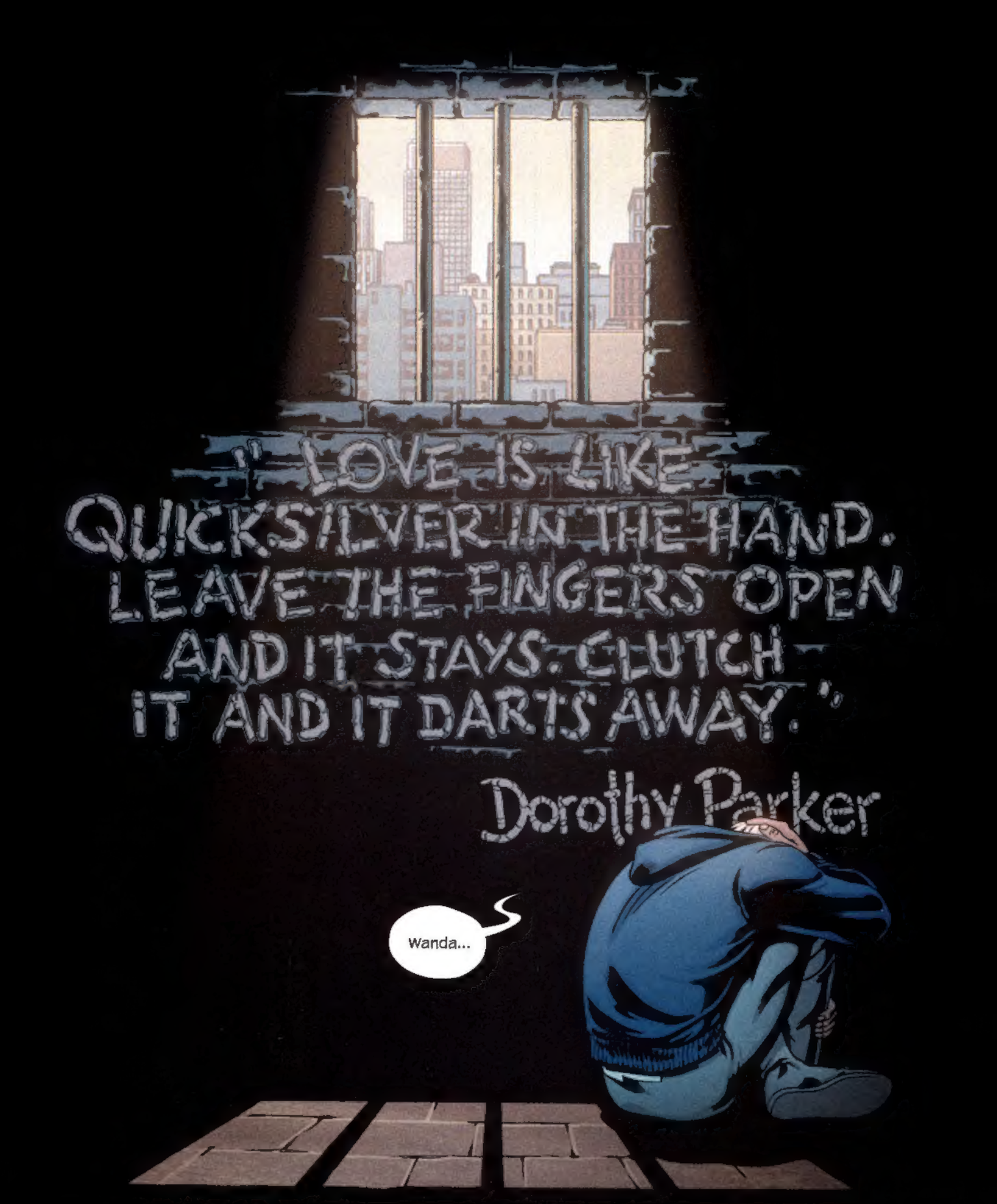

THE QUICK AND THE DEAD

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SPECIAL THANKS TO ANDY SCHMIDT

WHERE THE HELL'S MY LAWYER?
I'M SURE HE'S RIGHT ON HIS WAY OVER, T-BAR. AFTER ALL, YOU PROB'LY GOT HIM ON...WHAT? A MILLION BUCK RETAINER?
YOU'RE A RIOT.
WELL, WELL! THE BAR IS IN THE HOUSE.
RUFUS. M'MAN.
WHAT'D THEY NAIL YOUR SORRY BUTT FOR, T-BAR?
B&E, YOU?
KICKED THE CRAP OUTTA A DUDE WHO GOT IN MY FACE.
ALLEGEDLY.
YEAH, SAME. TOTALLY ALLEGEDLY FOR ME TOO.
WHO'S THAT?
HIM? THAT'S PRETTY BOY. SAY HI TO T-BAR, PRETTY BOY.
Crystal...
WHAT'S HE ASKING FOR? METH?

NAH. HE JUST KEEPS MUTTERING GIRL'S NAMES, OVER AND OVER. "WANDA." ONE SOUNDED LIKE "MAGGIE." "CRYSTAL." "LUNA." "LAYLA."
WHO ARE THEY?
DUNNO. I THINK THIS "LAYLA" IS HIS EX-WIFE. ALWAYS SOUNDS PISSED WHEN HE SAYS THAT ONE.
HEY, PRETTY BOY. GOT COMPANY.
SAY HI.
I AIN'T PLAYIN' WIT'CHOO, PRETTY BOY.
WHY YOU CALLING HIM "PRETTY BOY?"
WHOA.
DAMN. YOU DO THIS?
HELL NO. HE WAS LIKE THIS WHEN I GOT HERE.
COPS PICKED HIM UP FOR VAGRANCY OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT. NO I.D. NO NOTHIN'.

WHAT'S WITH HIS HANDS?
KEEPS GETTING THE SHAKES. DON'T 'CHA, PRETTY BOY.
WANDA...
IT'S TOO MUCH. I CAN'T... I CAN'T TAKE IT ANYMORE.
IT'S ALMOST OVER, MY DARLING BROTHER.
THE TRIALS THAT YOU'VE BEEN PUT THROUGH... ALL THAT YOU'VE ENDURED...
...YOU'RE ABOUT TO COME THROUGH TO THE OTHER SIDE.
AND BEST OF ALL...
YOU'VE BEEN JUDGED WORTHY.

LOOK WHO'S TALKING!

HEROES WRITER AND NEW ULTIMATE X-MEN SCRIBE, ARON COLEITE

MARVEL: *Welcome to the (Ultimate) X-Men, Aron Coleite! We hope you survive the experience! You work on* Heroes *and now* Ultimate X-Men. *It's safe to assume you are a fan of the super hero genre, yes? How long have you read comics?*

ARON COLEITE: For a very, very long time. Much to my wife's chagrin. There are stacks and stacks of comics in our garage and closets and in my office and on my night-stand and in my bathroom (there's a lot in the bathroom).

MARVEL: *What was the first Marvel comic you remember reading? What did you collect/read through the years?*

AC: My brother was a long-time subscriber to the Electric Company Spider-Man series. So technically, that was my initial exposure. But, my first real comics memory was at a Sci-Fi Convention in Los Angeles. I had twenty bucks and I spent it on *Peter Porker: The Incredible Spider-Ham* and *X-Men: God Loves/Man Kills*. I was so amazed that kind of storytelling was possible. So emotional. So beautiful. And *X-Men* was good too.

MARVEL: *Heroes has developed a very fast-paced technique of storytelling, interweaving multiple characters and sub-plots, as well as being heavy on mystery. Will you be utilizing any of the same styles used on the show for your arc on Ultimate X-Men?*

AC: I'm trying to pack 40 pages of story into 22 pages of art – filled with action, mystery and twists. But, it all comes down to character. Writing for the X-Men is my dream come true. I just want to write amazing stories for these characters.

MARVEL: *Your run starts with #94. Now, we all know that that issue number has a certain history in the X-Verse for shock and bold new directions (Editor's Note – the original issue 94 of Uncanny X-Men was the first issue post Giant Sized X-Men of the All-New, All-Different X-Men). Can we expect anything similar for issue 94 of Ultimate X-Men?*

AC: Not so much with the all-new. But a lot with the all-different.

MARVEL: *I hear rumblings that you are introducing the Ultimate version of a popular team with ties to the X-Men. Any truth to these, eh?*

AC: There's some truth. Because I hate spoilers, I'll give you a hint. It rhymes with Shmalfa Flight. With Schmindicator. And Shaurora. And Shaman – that last one didn't work so well.

MARVEL: *Even though you are working in the Ultimate Universe, you have no doubt heard of Secret Invasion and the Skrulls taking over the Marvel Universe. Who do you think is a Skrull and why?*

AC: Super-Skrull. I'm pretty sure he's a Skrull. It's in his name. And Xavin from Runaways. That guy totally looks like a Skrull.

MARVEL: *Final words for the readers out there?*

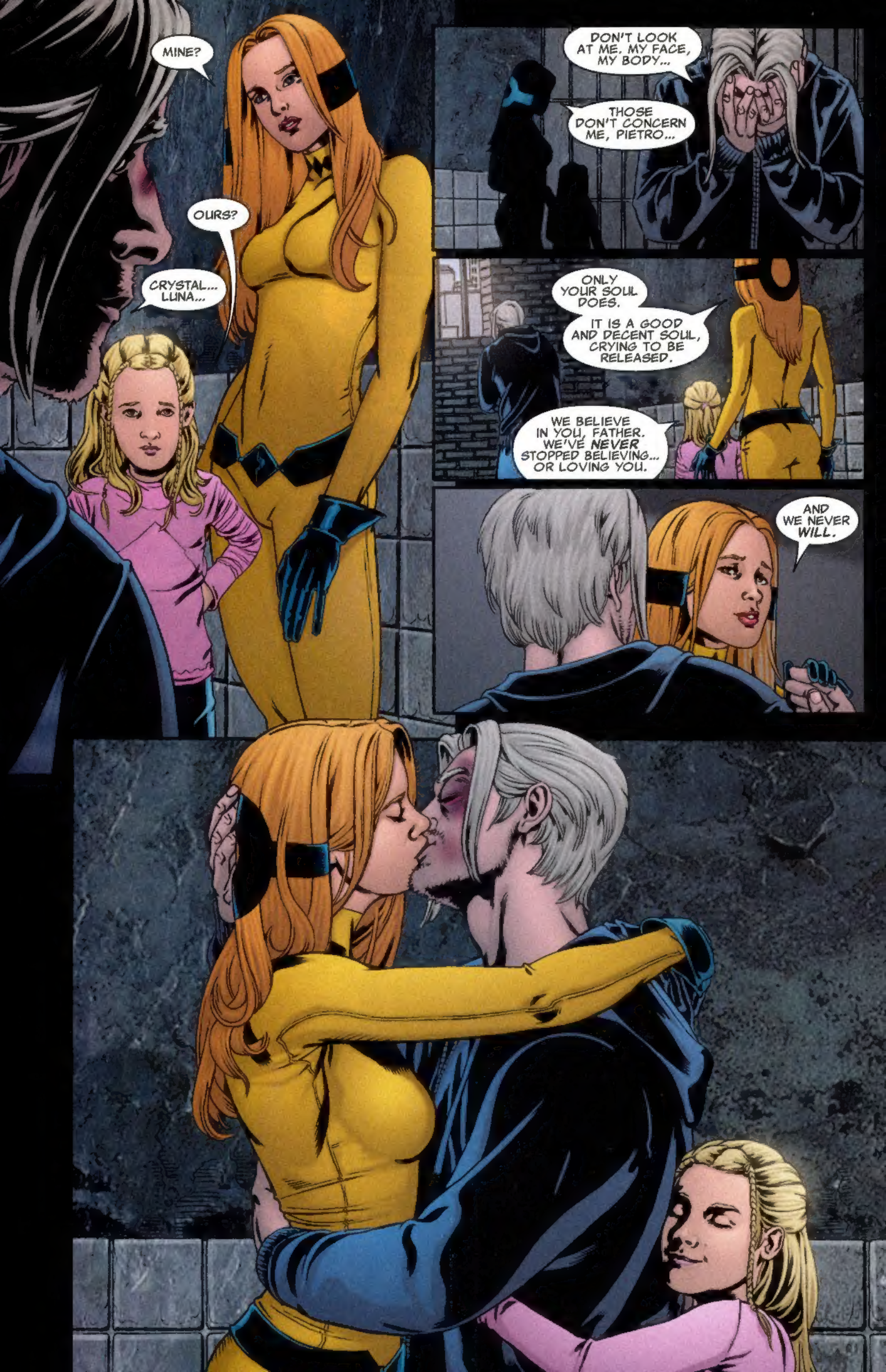
AC: This is really my dream come true. I hope everyone likes what I'm doing. And if you don't, blame Jeph Loeb.

Ultimate X-Men #94 On Sale May 2008

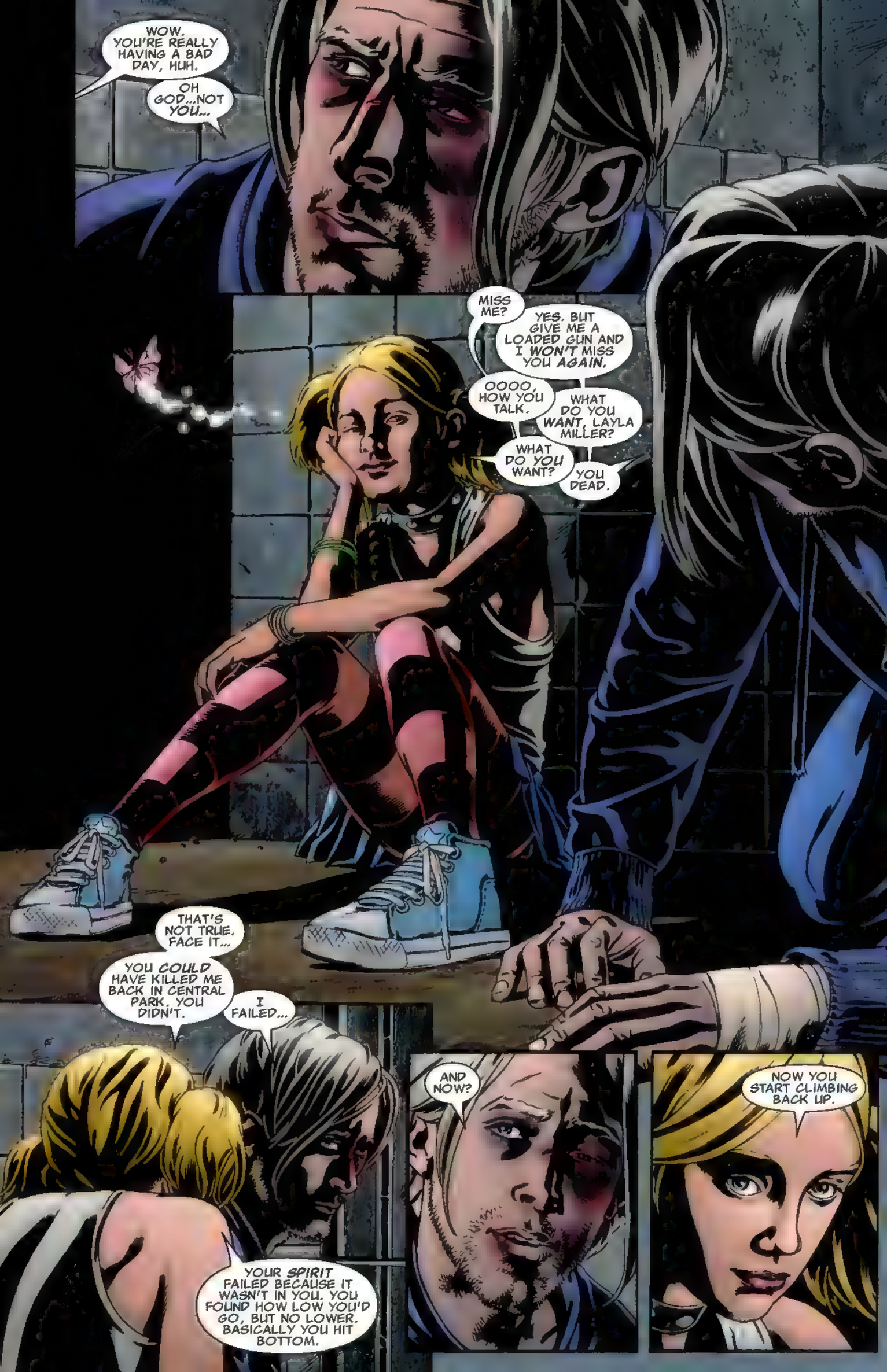
'Nuff Said!

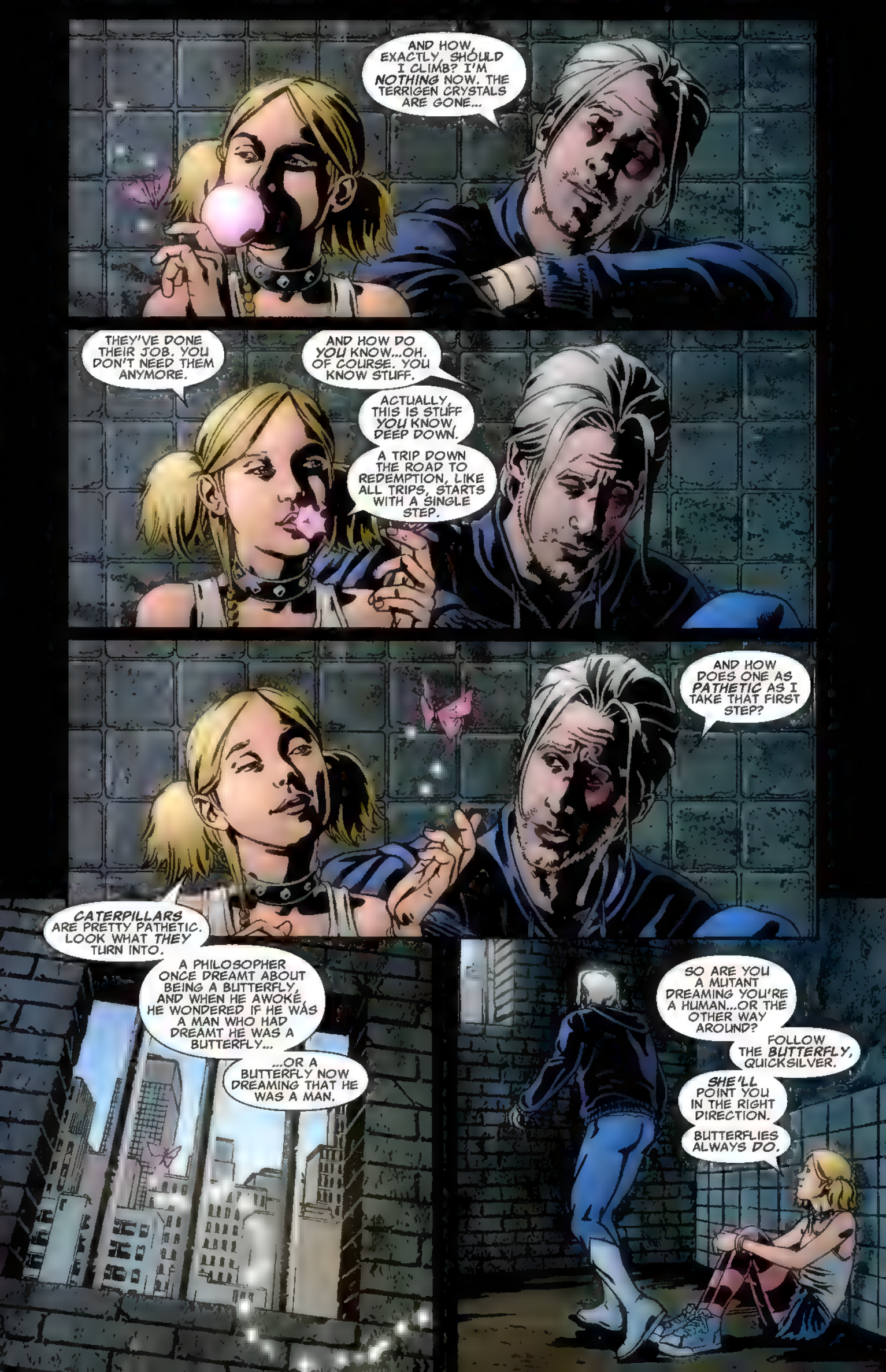
WORTHY? WORTHY OF WHAT?
CONTEMPT?
MY VERY BODY IS TURNING AGAINST ME. LOOK AT THIS! LOOK...
I AM LOOKING, AND I'LL TELL YOU WHAT I SEE:
I SEE A GOOD MAN.
A MAN WHO HAS CONSISTENTLY ACTED OUT OF HIS FERVENT BELIEF IN WHAT'S BEST FOR HIS LOVED ONES AND HIS PEOPLE.
ONE COULD SAY THE SAME OF HITLER.
HE ACTED OUT OF FERVENT BELIEFS. WAS HE A GOOD MAN?
WHY DO THESE DISCUSSIONS ALWAYS COME DOWN TO HITLER?
WHAT DO YOU KNOW OF HIM?
I...
STAND UP!!
YOUR FATHER IS SPEAKING TO YOU!!

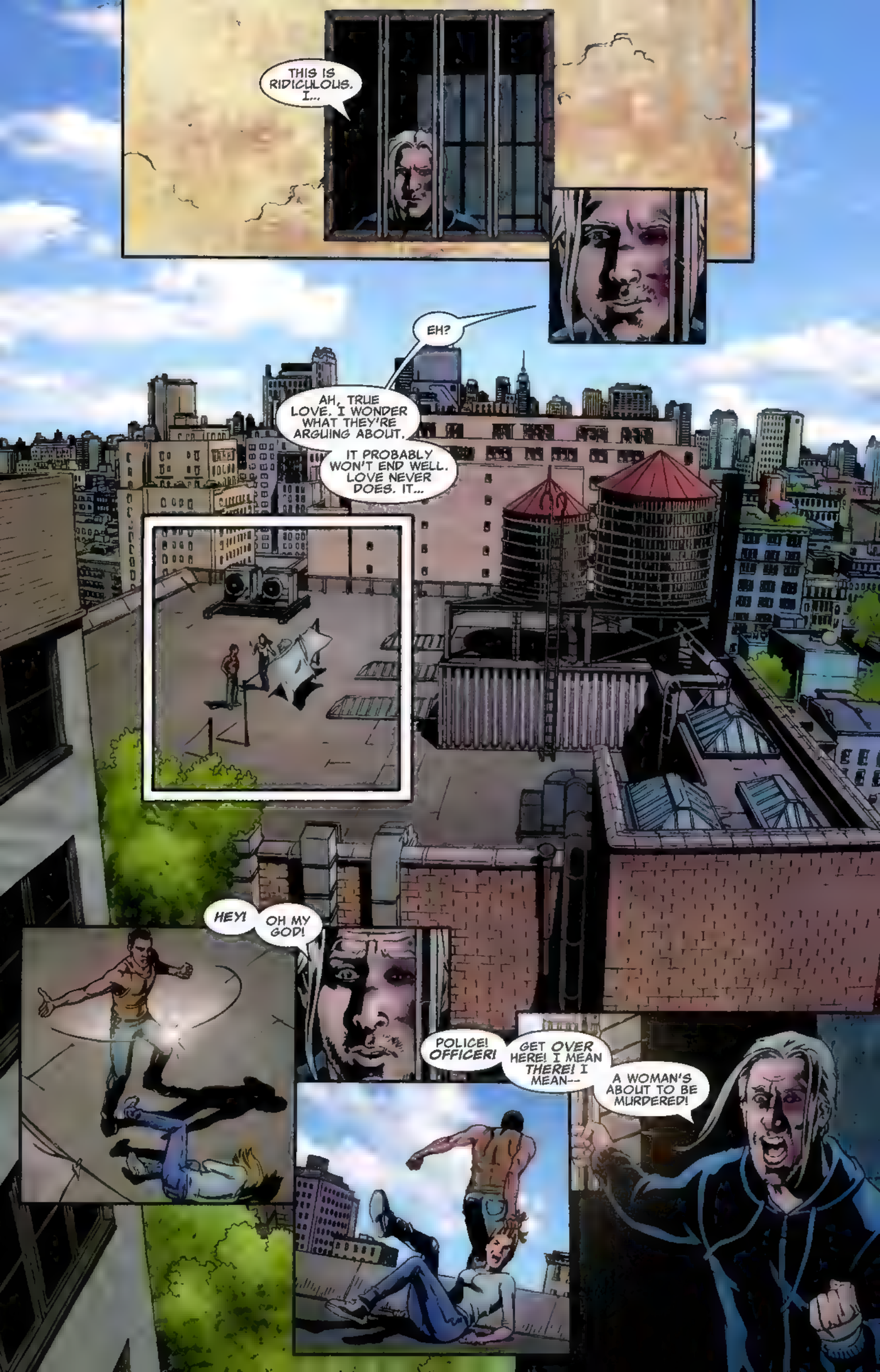
YOU ALWAYS BELIEVED YOU KNEW *MORE* THAN I. THAT YOU WERE MY SUPERIOR, BOTH INTELLECTUALLY AND MORALLY.
STILL BELIEVE THAT, DO YOU?
WELL? ANSWER ME!
I... DON'T KNOW...
A MORE HONEST ANSWER THAN I'D HAVE *EXPECTED*, QUICKSILVER.
MY PARENTS DIED BECAUSE OF HITLER. I SUFFERED IN A CONCENTRATION CAMP BECAUSE OF HIM. EVIL, AS PURE AS IT COMES.
BUT I MET YOUR MOTHER IN THE CAMP. WITHOUT HITLER'S ACTIONS, YOU'D NEVER HAVE BEEN BORN.
PERHAPS THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN BEST.
DON'T PLAY THE SELF-PITY CARD WITH *MAGNETO!*
I'VE HAD MORE HARDSHIPS, MORE SETBACKS, THAN YOU'LL *EVER* KNOW! AND I SEEK *NO ONE'S* PITY!
I EXPECT NO *LESS* FROM YOU!
MAYBE THAT'S THE PROBLEM.
I'M DROWNING UNDER THE WEIGHT OF EXPECTATIONS. YOURS...WANDA'S...


MINE?
OURS?
CRYSTAL... LUNA...
DON'T LOOK AT ME. MY FACE, MY BODY...
THOSE DON'T CONCERN ME, PIETRO...
ONLY YOUR SOUL DOES.
IT IS A GOOD AND DECENT SOUL, CRYING TO BE RELEASED.
WE BELIEVE IN YOU, FATHER. WE'VE NEVER STOPPED BELIEVING... OR LOVING YOU.
AND WE NEVER WILL.

OKAY, THIS HERE IS JUST MESSED UP.
ALL MUTTERING TO HIMSELF...YOU UNDERSTAND ANYTHING HE'S SAYING?
NOT A DAMNED THING. GUY WAS SCREWY BEFORE, BUT HE'S GETTING WORSE.
HEY! PRETTY BOY! KNOCK IT THE HELL OFF!
Y'HEAR ME? BAD ENOUGH I GOTTA HANG HERE WAITING FOR MY LAWYER...
I DON'T NEED YOUR CRAZINESS ON TOP OF IT! Y'GET THAT?
CR-CRYSTAL?
DO I LOOK LIKE YOUR DAMNED CRYSTAL, BOY?
YEAH, THAT'S RIGHT! YOU BETTER BE SHAKIN'!


WOW. YOU'RE REALLY HAVING A BAD DAY, HUH.
OH GOD...NOT YOU...
MISS ME?
YES. BUT GIVE ME A LOADED GUN AND I WON'T MISS YOU AGAIN.
OOOO, HOW YOU TALK.
WHAT DO YOU WANT, LAYLA MILLER?
WHAT DO YOU WANT?
YOU DEAD.
THAT'S NOT TRUE. FACE IT...
YOU COULD HAVE KILLED ME BACK IN CENTRAL PARK. YOU DIDN'T.
I FAILED...
YOUR SPIRIT FAILED BECAUSE IT WASN'T IN YOU. YOU FOUND HOW LOW YOU'D GO, BUT NO LOWER. BASICALLY YOU HIT BOTTOM.
AND NOW?
NOW YOU START CLIMBING BACK UP.


AND HOW, EXACTLY, SHOULD I CLIMB? I'M *NOTHING* NOW. THE TERRIGEN CRYSTALS ARE GONE...
THEY'VE DONE THEIR JOB. YOU DON'T NEED THEM ANYMORE.
AND HOW DO *YOU* KNOW...OH. OF COURSE. YOU KNOW STUFF.
ACTUALLY, THIS IS STUFF *YOU* KNOW, DEEP DOWN.
A TRIP DOWN THE ROAD TO REDEMPTION, LIKE ALL TRIPS, STARTS WITH A SINGLE STEP.
AND HOW DOES ONE AS *PATHETIC* AS I TAKE THAT FIRST STEP?
CATERPILLARS ARE PRETTY PATHETIC. LOOK WHAT *THEY* TURN INTO.
A PHILOSOPHER ONCE DREAMT ABOUT BEING A BUTTERFLY, AND WHEN HE AWOKE, HE WONDERED IF HE WAS A MAN WHO HAD DREAMT HE WAS A BUTTERFLY...
...OR A BUTTERFLY NOW DREAMING THAT HE WAS A MAN.
SO ARE YOU A MUTANT DREAMING YOU'RE A HUMAN...OR THE OTHER WAY AROUND?
FOLLOW THE *BUTTERFLY*, QUICKSILVER.
SHE'LL POINT YOU IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION.
BUTTERFLIES ALWAYS *DO*.


THIS IS RIDICULOUS. I...
EH?
AH, TRUE LOVE. I WONDER WHAT THEY'RE ARGUING ABOUT.
IT PROBABLY WON'T END WELL. LOVE NEVER DOES. IT...
HEY!
OH MY GOD!
POLICE! OFFICER!
GET OVER HERE! I MEAN THERE! I MEAN--
A WOMAN'S ABOUT TO BE MURDERED!

SHUT UP IN THERE!
PLEASE! SOMEBODY DO SOMETHING!
HE...HE'S DRAGGING HER TOWARD THE EDGE OF THE ROOF!
LIKED HIM BETTER WHEN HE WAS JUST MUTTERING.
NO KIDDING.
THIS FOOL JUST GOT ON MY LAST NERVE!
I--
WHAT THE HELL--?!?!
OH MY GOD... IT...
IT'S NOT POSS-- ...IT...

HE'S A MUTANT! HE'S A FREAKING MUTANT! GET US OUT!
YOU GOT US LOCKED UP WITH A FREAKING MUTANT AND HE'S GOING NUCLEAR OR SOMETHING!
YOU'RE RIGHT!
HAHAA HAAAHAA HHAAA!
YOU'RE RIGHT!!
I'M A FREAKING MUTANT!
BUT NOT JUST ANY FREAKING MUTANT!

I'M FREAKING QUICKSILVER!!! AND YOU CAN EAT MY FREAKING DUST!

AAAHH!

WH-WHO...?!?
IT'S ALL RIGHT. YOU'LL BE FINE.
I'M QUICKSILVER. I'M...
A HERO.
I WOULDN'T GO BACK TO YOUR BOYFRIEND, BY THE WAY. HE OBVIOUSLY DOESN'T LOVE YOU. AND TRUST ME, I KNOW A BIT ABOUT--
CA-CAN'T... BREATHE... I...
RIGHT. OF COURSE. SORRY. I'LL DROP YOU OFF RIGHT--
"...NOW."
DAD? WHERE'D SHE COME FROM?
WHERE... AM I?!? AM I DEAD? IS...IS THIS HEAVEN?
UH...NO. IT'S MONTAUK POINT.
MONTAUK POINT?! ON LONG ISLAND?!
NO, THEY MOVED IT TO DELAWARE. YES, ON LONG ISLAND.
BUT I...I WAS JUST IN MANHATTAN. THAT'S, LIKE, TWO HOURS AWAY! IT'S... IT'S...

A MIRACLE.
IT'S A MIRACLE.
WHEN I THINK OF HOW PRESUMPTUOUS I WAS...
BELIEVING THAT I KNEW GOD'S WILL...

THAT I WAS HIS VESSEL ON EARTH...
...OPERATING ON HIS BEHALF...
I DIDN'T KNOW MY OWN MIND.
HOW COULD I HAVE PRESUMED TO KNOW HIS?
OF ALL MY SINS...PERHAPS THAT WAS THE GREATEST.
AND WHAT HAS HE DONE?
HE'S FORGIVEN ME.

I, WHOSE ARROGANCE HAS BEEN TOWERING...
...AM HUMBLED IN THE FACE OF SUCH GREATNESS...SUCH PUISSANCE...
...SUCH INFINITE MER--
--CEEEEEEEEEEEEE!!!!

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, AS WE PREPARE TO START OUR DESCENT TOWARD--
WUUMF
WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT?!

MAN IN THE WATER!!!
LOWER THE AFT LIFEBOAT! HURRY!
WHERE'D HE COME FROM?!
WHO CARES? HURRY UP!
Wanda...
Father... Crystal... Luna...
Layla...
God on high...
THANK YOU...FOR EVERYTHING...
WHETHER I LIVE...OR DIE...
...I AM... CONTENT... KNOWING THAT...
...I...AM LOVED...

GOT HIM!!!
HE'S ALIVE!
HE MUST BE THE LUCKIEST MAN ON THE PLANET!
WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU, FELLA? A SHIPWRECK?
YES...IN A...MANNER OF SPEAKING...
THE SHIPWRECK... THAT WAS MY LIFE.
WHAT'S YOUR NAME?
PIETRO.
WELL, PY-AYTRO, YOU'VE JUST BEEN PICKED UP BY THE MOST LUXURIOUS CRUISE SHIP IN THE PACIFIC. JUST LIE BACK AND RELAX...
...AND IT'S CLEAR SAILING FROM HERE ON IN.
FROM YOUR LIPS... TO GOD'S EARS.
END!

The search for the lost Eternals begins!
ETERNALS
SPECIAL PREVIEW OF THE NEW ETERNALS
ONGOING SERIES BEGINNING THIS JUNE!

In the beginning there were the Celestials.

These enormous Space-Gods came to Earth to perform genetic experiments as they had on many a planet. They took the primitive creature known as man and, from him, formed two new races. Some they twisted into monstrous forms, calling them Deviants. Some, they left resembling their human cousins but endowed with amazing powers. These became known as the Eternals. These two opposing forces were left to shape the destiny of mankind for purposes known only to the Space-Gods themselves.

For many years, mankind worshipped these Eternals as gods, just as it feared the Deviants as devils...but then came the day when the Eternals vanished, and the heavens were silent.

The Eternal known as Sprite, forever trapped in a prepubescent body, had stolen the Eternals' memories. As punishment for keeping him ever-young and treating him like the child he appeared to be, he tricked them into mass amnesia while making himself mortal, finally able to become an adult. The unknowing Eternals were scattered across the world, forced to live as men do.

Fortunately the Eternal known as Ikaris remembered his true identity, and was able to awaken some of his fellow Eternals. Soon, Makkari, Thena, Zuras, Ajak, Sersi, and the power mad Druig were also aware of their pasts.

In a play for control before all the Eternals realize their identities, the Deviants captured Makkari to use him to awaken the Dreaming Celestial. His awakening signaled the Horde, sort of cosmic locusts, to come devour the Earth. Now towering over Golden Gate Park in San Francisco, the Dreaming Celestial stands observing mankind until the Horde arrives to destroy the planet.

Now the Eternals need to find their lost brethren before the Horde arrives, all the while dealing with internal strife as the ambitious Druig vies for power. Can the Eternals come together in time to save the world?

ETERNALS

JUNE 2008

DREAMSPACE: MAKKARI AND THE DREAMING CELESTIAL.

IT IS YOUR WISH TO LOCATE THE OTHER (CLASSIFICATION: ETERNALS).

YES.

I WILL (EDUCATE/CLARIFY/HELP) YOU BY ALLOWING YOU TO ACCESS THE GENERAL ANALYSIS DICTATED BY MY (MANDATE/FUNCTION).

*WHAT DOES **THIS** HAVE TO DO WITH FINDING MISSING ETERNALS?*

I AM SYSTEMATICALLY CATALOGING EACH AND EVERY BEING WITH SKILLS AND POWERS THAT ARE ABOVE THE LEVEL OF HOMO SAPIEN-SAPIENS.

PAST OR PRESENT, IT MATTERS NOT.

EACH BEING IN CONTINUUM HAS A SPECIFIC LIFE (MARK/PATTERN/SIGNATURE).

EACH IS CONNECTED IN SOME WAY WITH ALL. ONE BEING ENCOUNTERS ANOTHER AND LEAVES BEHIND (EVIDENCE/TRAIL) OF CONTACT.

*WHICH IS WHERE **I** COME IN.*

CORRECT. I MUST BOND WITH A SPECIMEN OF THE TARGET SENTIENCE IN ORDER TO (ACCESS/FILTER/CATALOG) THE (MARK/PATTERN/SIGNATURE).

THAT VERY (MARK/PATTERN/SIGNATURE) IS REGISTERED AND IN TURN PASSED ON TO THE NEXT BEING THAT IS MET.
THUS, ALL BEINGS ARE CONNECTED.
HOW DOES ALL THIS HELP ME?
THE (CLASSIFICATION: ETERNALS) YOU SEEK ARE A SUBSET OF THE GENERAL ANALYSIS DICTATED BY MY (MANDATE/FUNCTION).
THOUGH (CLASSIFICATION: ETERNAL/DEACTIVATED) SPRITE HAS CORRUPTED THE IDENTITIES AND SELF-AWARENESS OF THE ONES YOU SEEK, THEIR (MARKS/PATTERNS/SIGNATURES) CANNOT BE ALTERED.
THIS IS HORRIFIC...
THIS IS LIFE. MUCH OF THE SAME IS FOUND THROUGHOUT THE COSMOS.
YOU'RE RECORDING THEIR DEFENSES; PROBING THEIR STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES...
YOU INFER THAT I WISH TO MAKE AN OFFENSIVE ASSAULT ON YOUR (EARTH/PLANET/PLACE)?
IT IS WITHIN YOUR POWER.

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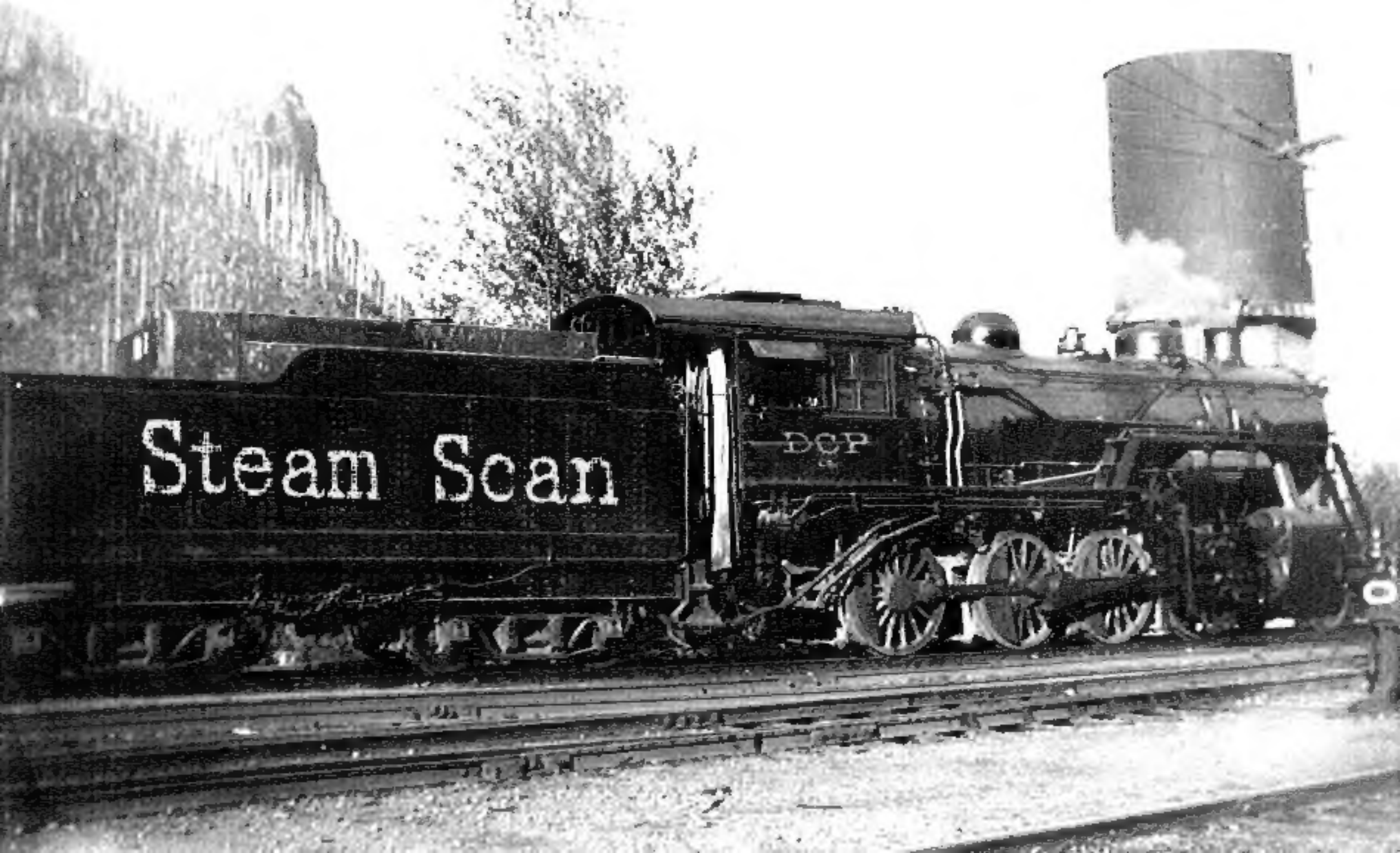
ETERNALS #1 On-Sale June 2008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